

Jefferson County Public Defender Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 4, 2020 – meeting held via Zoom

Present: Board members; Jason Pattison, Robert Little, Heather Foy
Also in attendance; Judge Mote, Judge Hensley, Magistrate Jacobs, Diane Barton

- Diane asked if the 2021 meeting schedule could be set. Heather Foy made a motion to continue meeting the 1st Wednesday of each quarter. These will take place on the second month of the quarter at 12:00 Noon. Jason seconded the motion and meeting dates approved for 2021.

February 3

May 5

August 4

November 4

- It was noted that the board needs a secretary to document meeting minutes. Heather offered to serve in this capacity and members Robert and Jason agreed and motioned for Heather Foy to serve as the Secretary.

- Discussion took place about contracts, changes in compensation, and up to date numbers.

D. Sharpe's numbers were discussed. Nancy Jacobs discussed the need to look at case numbers and the lack of public defenders. Judge Mote echoed the need for an appropriate route moving forward. Nancy spent time doing research regarding reimbursement and provided a plan to all in attendance.

- Nancy provided numbers on how many public defenders we need. These numbers should show a little cushioning. A rough estimate during COVID is that 90% of Superior cases need a PD. Nancy stated that she studied numbers from 2016-current and projected what we might need moving forward based on the PD Commission. She also reviewed the max. Numbers those public defenders could take within the Indiana adequate staffing category. This was separated by category (criminal/felony, juveniles, and Chins cases).

- It was noted that this program is very time consuming for Diane. The state recommendation is that a staff member outside of the court system should handle all paperwork. We also need to consider what we are spending and if we are being fiscally wise with our current process. Nancy shared numbers that will be sent to board members in a report that showed what we spent in 2019 and what the county is being reimbursed for. Nancy contacted Scott County to get information about their program. They have created a "Chief Public Defender." State law requires this salary to match the Prosecutor but it does not have to be a 1.0 FTE. This person handles all paperwork and "runs the program." Their county contracts with public defenders like we do. Nancy also shared that at the state level, they encourage counties to combine with other counties to create regional PD offices. This could lead to better and more efficient services.

- Nancy shared two proposal options for appointing a Chief Public Defender. The responsibility of interviewing and hiring would fall on the board. Discussion continued about next steps and if this idea is feasible for 2021.

- The board decided to meet soon to further discuss options. The board will hold a special meeting on **Thursday November 12th at 4 PM**. Robert will schedule the courthouse Commissioners room for this meeting. In addition, Robert will follow up regarding a rescheduled training date for the board and will ask if November 17 or 18 are possible dates.

Minutes submitted by Heather Foy.